GYPSY RETURNS IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL, THE DAY OF THE CZAR

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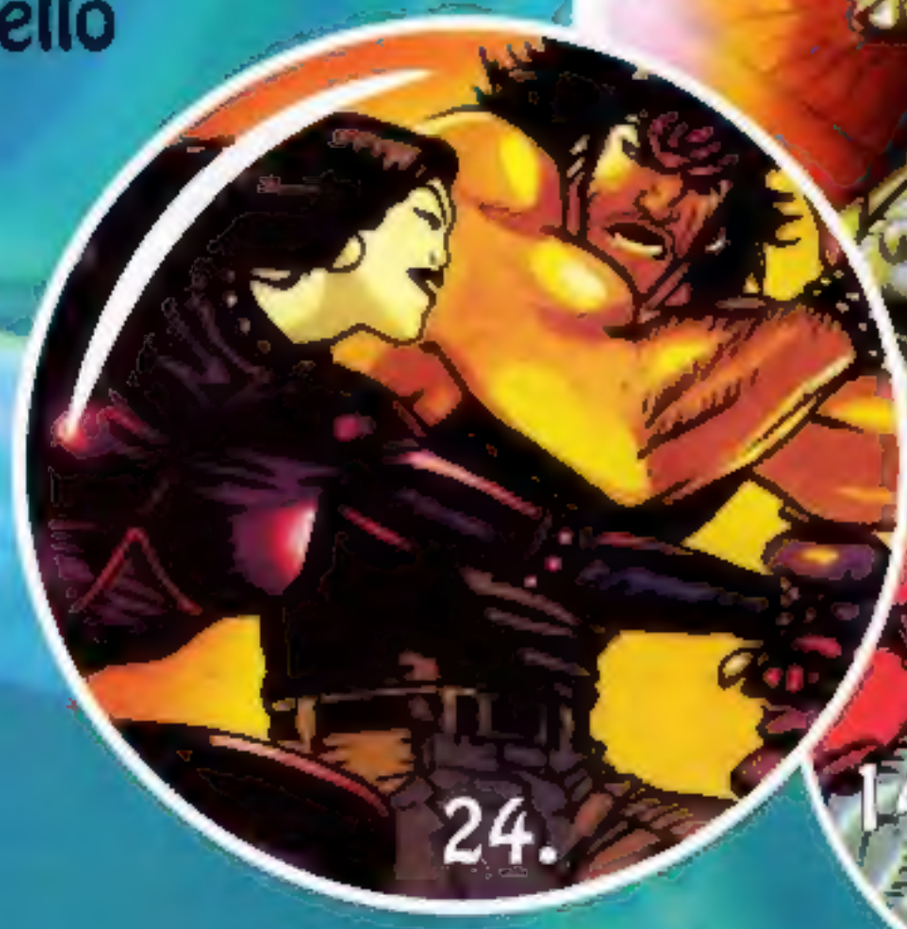

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© Dargaud (SUISSE) S.A. 1999 Gypsy 3- The Day Of The Czar by Marini and Smolderen

HEAVY METAL

Publishers Note:

I've never been shy to shamelessly promote Heavy Metal's extracurricular activities, through the stories, galleries, letters page, and yes, even the publisher's note, and this issue is no exception.

Mind you, I try not to do it all the time, and I don't want to do it so often that you all go, "Aw geez, there he goes again!" But 99% of the time when I do push something, it's because I sincerely think it is something you're gonna like. Which, by the way, I'll tell you right here and now, if you don't like what I have to say or how I'm saying (or pushing) it, TELL ME and we'll talk about it then.

Okay, now I'm going to brag about our NEW website...picture me ducking, as you all throw stuff! Seriously, I know what you're thinking, because every time I would hear someone pushing their ".COM", I wanted to puke for six days straight, and I don't want this to be like that.

YES, we sell stuff there, YES, there are web exclusives, and YES, we have a fairly typical navigational structure you see elsewhere. BUT, in the immortal words of the HighLander, "There can be only one..." and that ONE my friends is pure Heavy Metal!

We've teamed up with the amazingly talented crew at TheThreshold (.com for those not in the know) to revamp, rebuild and bring you an all new internet version of Heavy Metal that goes beyond my wildest dreams.

We've put a place together where you can tour behind the scenes of past, present and future movie projects. You'll find 6 exclusive online graphic novels each year... full previews of past historical Heavy Metal issues, as well as the coolest things in the new ones... piles of artists' galleries with bios, and cool links to some of the hippest related sites around! (Can you say wordsandpictures.org anyone?) Plus a billion other cool things you'll freak over, so I won't go into them all right now.

What more could you ask for? How about a live webcam from the desk of Simon Bisley? Anyone else out there interested in looking over his shoulder when the BIZ is slamming away on his latest masterpiece?! (At least I'll know when he's lying about finishing a painting for me, when he's really watching television!) Well, stay tuned Buckos because 2000 is going to be the year.

Okay, okay. I know, enough already. I promise I'll shut up, but only if you'll promise you'll take a quick peek! If you don't like it you don't have to come back, but you still have to buy all the regular issues (and specials). Speaking of which, you've got a pretty freakin' good one right here! I won't go into all the details like I usually do, mainly because all this web talk has tired me out so I'll just tell you to read on, and I'll catch you in another 60 days! (or in the chat room at Heavy-Metal...oh, you know...)

Best,

Kris Eastman

Website: www.Heavy-metal.net

DIALOGUE

Dear H.M.,
I have always thought that you were out on the front lines battling the evils of censorship and selling out, so imagine my dismay when I found out that FAKK2 is being released with a PG-13 rating. Everything that I have seen and read does not translate into PG-13. I thought it was coming out with an R rating. Tell me that you didn't edit it to earn a PG-13 to draw in the adolescent fan-boy dollar. I have seen most of the FAKK2 stuff. I have a signed copy of Thumpin Guts and the sketchbooks and whatever. I will buy darn near anything that Biz does. Alex Ross can't carry the Biz's jock strap in my opinion. I will continue to support you, but I do feel slightly betrayed. I hope you didn't compromise your artistic integrity just to earn the PG rating and probably a lot more box office dollars.
Daniel

Dear H.M.,
Just wondering if there's any truth to the rumor that FAKK2 will be rated PG-13? I'm sorry to have to say that if that is the case, it would suck. How can you have a flick starring Julie Strain and put out by you guys that doesn't give up blood, guts and tits? You should be going for an NC-17! Ok, maybe that's a little extreme, but I'm sure you see my point. So what's the word? Let me know.
Mr. Bungle

Dear H.M.,
I have a problem with the FAKK2 movie. It's hard for me to accept that you guys got buckled down by the execs to make a PG-13 movie. I don't know how they even would consider a PG-13 movie with all the factors involved (subject matter, Bisley art, Julie Strain). As an avid Heavy Metal reader, I just don't have any desire to see such a movie.
Rika

Dear Readers,
I wanted all three of these to run, my favorites of many we got on this subject matter, so I could restate for everyone... Thanks for your support, and your letters helped us convince the executives to do it our way...THE FILM WILL CARRY AN "R" RATING!! Again, my thanks.

Dear H.M.,
I'm amazed by some of the art that is in your magazine. Simon Bisley is one of these artists. GAAAAAUUUUDDD awfully good! Anyway, I was hoping you could tell me about some of his upcoming work. Also, will there be a FAKK2 video game??
David

Dear David,
I bow to the incredible Lord Bisley daily! Simon will have a new Simon Coldwater story in the next issue of Heavy Metal, and we'll be starting a 96 page graphic novel on the website that will run at two pages a week for nearly a year. Cool beans!
Video game, you say?! Why yes-Ritual Entertainment will release a p.c. game that picks up 20 years after the FAKK2 movie ends. It will blow your mind. Check it out at Ritual.com

Dear H.M.,
I've been a subscriber of HM since April of 77. I have every issue and several dupes of back issues. I have watched the trend of censoring issues grow from occasional incidents to the now apparent constant and continuous altering of the original content. This is artwork. If members of the public are offended that their kids are seeing controversial content then THEIR KIDS SHOULDN'T BE LOOKING AT THIS!!!
KTT

Dear KTT,
I love letters like yours and couldn't agree more. Unfortunately for now, the system is what it is and if we didn't censor a little bit, they wouldn't let us sell the copies we do. We'd all lose!

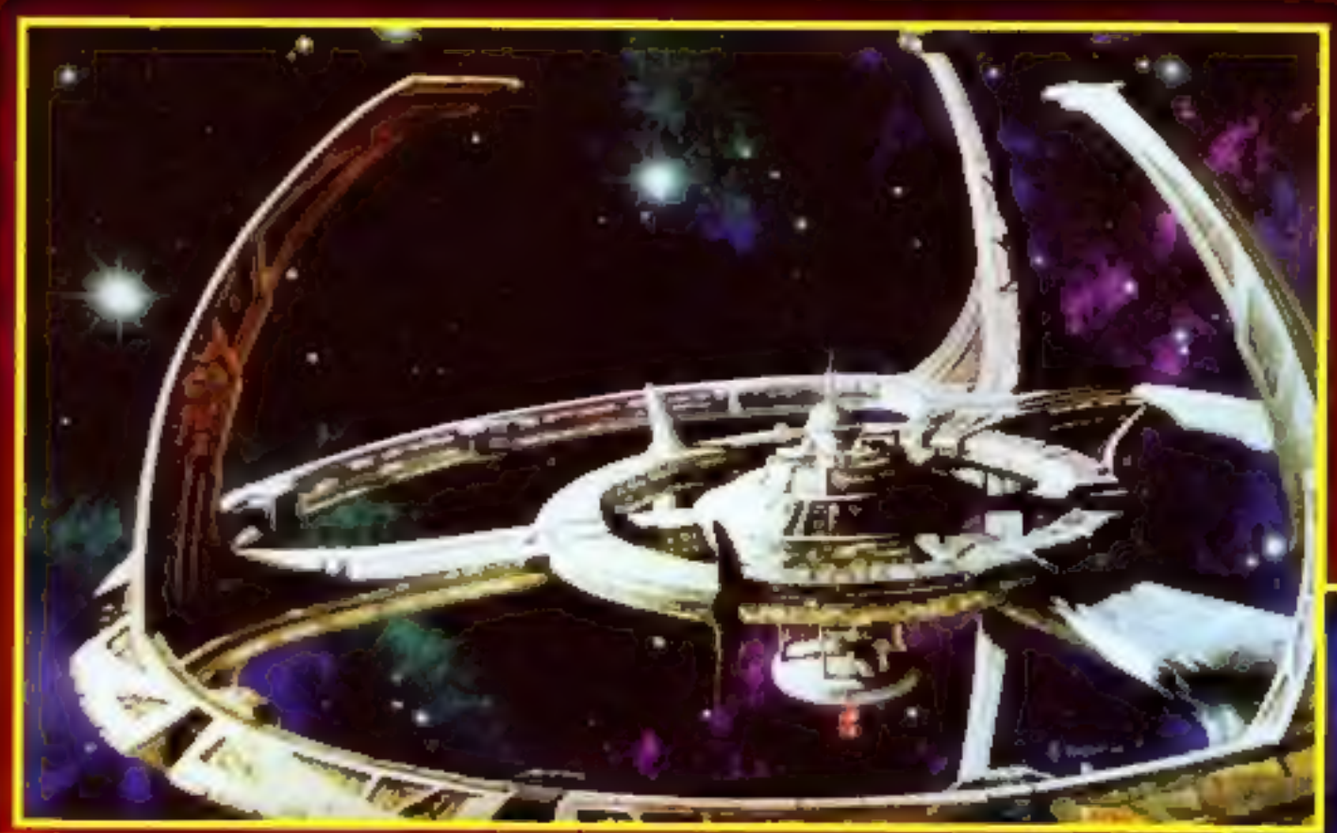
Any questions or comments you may have, please send to: Heavy Metal, 100 Merrick Road, Suite 400, East Building, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11570

GALLERY

H. ED COX

H. Ed Cox was born to military parents and spent the early part of his life traveling and gaining valuable life experiences. At an early age he realized his ability to see things differently and express himself in ways different from his peers.

In 1985 Cox began to freelance his art, painting everything and anything that sat still long enough, and having an occasional piece printed and published.



In 1995 Ed began to illustrate for the AMT/Ertl Co., a manufacturer of STAR WARS and STAR TREK scale models and replicas. To date, Ed has painted over 70 illustrations for them and had his work displayed in the Smithsonian Institute during their STAR WARS 20th anniversary exhibit.

His focus these days is cover work for several RPG (role playing games) companies, painting such diverse subjects as two headed monster dogs from hell to swashbuckling pirates.

Ed is also currently working as production illustrator for a movie company in Hollywood on a sci-fi/fantasy movie that will be coming out at the end of the year.

He works from his art studio in Salisbury, Maryland and is proudly supported by his loving wife Amy, his daughter Allie, and their two dogs Penny and Toby.

You can view more of Ed's work at http://www.edcox.com

DOSSIER

DOSSIER IS WRITTEN BY S.C. RINGGENBERG
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Walk on the Dark Side with Kelley Jones

For the last decade or so, Kelley Jones has consistently been one of the most interesting artists in comics. Although he has been somewhat typed as a horror artist for his work on Deadman, various Aliens books, and the 2 Hammer miniseries, he is also widely regarded as one of the best Batman artists of all time. Given the grim nature of much of his work, you might expect Jones to be one of these sullen, brooding artiste types, but you'd be wrong. Jones' personality is surprisingly sunny and positive. Although he is a serious, dedicated professional, from talking to him you soon realize that Kelley Jones wouldn't even be doing comics if it weren't also a hell of a lot of fun. Yet, his dedication to quality and originality shines through—all his projects, from his three-year tenure on Batman, to his most recent Batman Elseworlds miniseries, Haunted Gotham, to Crusade, his latest series for DC's Vertigo line, are darkly beautiful visual feasts that have been very well received.

RINGGENBERG: Kelley, what have you been doing for the last few years? When we spoke last (in 1995), you were finishing up the first Hammer series. How did The Hammer go over?

JONES: Generally you do something and that's that. But what I've found is, I got a lot of converts. I understood going in that there would be a lot of reticence towards yet another artist writing his own stuff, much less handling Lovecraft concepts, which always come off very hackneyed. So, my thing wasn't so much Lovecraft in and of slimy things in the dark. Mine was the total alienation of a character. And it was extremely interesting to do something along those lines. So, I would have Lovecraft aficionados react extremely enthusiastically. I would have very jaded comic book fans, some of (whom) said they dumped comics because they got tired of it, telling me how much they enjoyed it. I don't consider myself a terrific writer. I think I'm a pretty good plotter, but I'm not very good in terms of more academic writing. I pretty much wing it, you know. I knew that I didn't want to do a pastiche of Lovecraft. But I did want to get across something that was completely unique. Lovecraft got you to feel things that a lot of writers who are much, much better prose writers weren't able to achieve; he always described things that you couldn't really visualize, so therefore, they became more terrifying. I wanted to get across exactly what Lovecraft was feeling, that 'outsidedness'. And in creating a character who was outside, to try to make him interesting. The Hammer's decidedly alien, and some places that's cute, and other places it's terrifying. If the world was at stake and he needed your pancreas to create a spell, he very well might take it. Not ask you, just take it.

RINGGENBERG: What did you do after you concluded that first miniseries?

JONES: I did a one-shot explaining more about him, and then followed it up with another miniseries. I then concluded Crimson Mist, the third and final part of the Batman Red Rain trilogy. And since that time, I've done a four-part Prestige series with Batman called Haunted Gotham and an adaptation of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. As of now, I'm in the middle of just finishing designing a pretty gruesome vampire statue of Batman for Warner Brothers, as well as a lithograph of the Batcave, and I'm working on a new monthly series that'll go through Vertigo.

RINGGENBERG: Tell me about this new Vertigo series.

JONES: It's called The Crusade. Basically, it's the first Crusade of the year 2000. It's a premise from Steve Siegel, who did the adaptation on Sleepy Hollow. When he ran it by me initially, we had been talking about what we missed in comics. And one of the things that I missed was optimism. And that doesn't mean a Pollyanna approach, but just that even if everybody dies, it was for a point. There is some kind of seed of hope, where you felt like, okay, it wasn't worthless, and it isn't such a horrible, nihilistic world after all. Because I personally find that not too much fun to illustrate stories like that. I also find it ultimately not very saleable. I generally don't like stuff where you feel like you have to take a shower afterwards. If everybody in it is not too likeable, or reprehensible, or depressed, or really negative, why should you care? And I wanted more in-depth, expressive characters. I wanted things that don't insult your intelligence when you're done. You don't feel like it's too juvenile, or it's manipulative, or it's trying to be highbrow. It's just an entertaining story; funny where it's funny, scary where it's scary. I wanted something where you don't have all the answers… there's a certain enigmatic quality to it. I don't want endless storylines. A couple of issues and out. The subplots can carry on. But, I've always been terribly bored by subplots that take years to finish. Right now, the first issues are being written. I have yet to really get to the design of it. There's quite a number of characters in it. I don't like group books generally because they have so many characters that they basically only come on to say a cliché. I want to give everyone enough screen time. So, I want to spend time with them.

RINGGENBERG: When you say spending time with the characters, does that mean doing sketches, playing with them?

JONES: Partly it's that, I don't need to draw them to visualize them. They're in my head. I don't believe in endless amounts of designs, or thumbnails, because I think that in comics the trick is getting it from your head into a reader's hands with as little effort as possible. The immediacy is what makes it work. I know Steven wants to do a full script at first so he gets comfortable with it, and eventually go to plot. Because out of plots you get a lot of wonderful idiosyncratic moments, and inspirations come from that. And I think that you can tell when something's been planned into the ground. It comes off kind of boring. What we're trying to do is bring some of that freshness that I think a comic book really has to have, the twists and the turns from the plot, to my actually illustrating it, to it being in a store. You want as few steps as possible. No one told me, draw Deadman really skinny and corpselike. It was just that Mike Baron wrote it in a way that it made sense. Without saying do that, he just wrote it that way, and it was left open to interpretation. So, you look for happy things like that to happen… I turned down a lot of the big ticket things in the early '90's to do Deadmans and Aliens because I thought they were much better written, and I thought they had a chance of lasting longer in people's memories. When I took Batman, I didn't think you could really take an artist credibly unless he had done at least two years on a monthly book, and I hadn't done that yet. When Denny O'Neill offered that to me, it was a stunning honor… After I accepted, I completely froze up. I couldn't draw, for like a week. I kept trying and everything turned out like crap. I kept everything that I drew from that horrendous week to remind myself that, (laughs) you're never too big for your britches. I just can't understand that when you get handed an icon, you don't take it like, Wow, I'm really lucky! I gave it my all, all the time. To this day, that's the one thing I get pride out of. If someone says, 'Oh, so what do you do?' You don't have to explain some obscure X-Men character. You can say, Batman… We got reviewed in the New York Daily News. Batman was the only comic book they ever reviewed. That was wonderful. The reviewer mentioned in the same breath, Bob Kane, Frank Miller, and me, and said, this is a monthly worth fighting for. That meant a lot to me.

RINGGENBERG: Are you going to be completely wrapped up in Crusade during 2000?

JONES: Probably, but the good thing about having gone through that three years on Batman, and actually before that penciling and inking a lot of these big things is, I've learned to marshal my time really well. So, if they wanted more Haunted Gothams, I can fit that in. I don't like overworking, but overworking is if you do the same character, the same thing. When I was doing the monthly Batman, I penciled and inked The Hammer.

RINGGENBERG: That sounds like a lot of work.

JONES: It sounds like it, but now, when I read something over, I know what I want, and I'm confident in my ability. I'm not sitting there stressing over minute details because I know how to execute. I get started at eight, and it takes me about an hour to lay out a page, and about another three or four to finish it, no matter what's going on. I really think (with) comic books, you want to make sure the point of the page is clear. And you want to make sure, for example, that if it's a six-panel page, that two of those panels are wonderful, that they're eye-catching, that they grab you. And then I work on the center, the panels between those, and that means if there's something that needs to be punched to sell the point of that page—you do it. I don't take any page for granted. I don't think, OK, this one's not as important as the next one, or whatever. I read it over and I try to think, what's the most interesting thing on this page? One of the best things that I had happen was, Archie Goodwin told me after I had been on Batman two years, he hadn't noticed any repetitions. If Batman had to climb up a wall for the eighteenth time, it was a different way. You can only do that for so long. And that's the trick. Sometimes you just go, Hey, I've got to get it done. And other times, you go, I've got to (give the readers) more. But, that decision's got to be every week, every day, every hour. Because you've got to justify the expense. I don't think people have a problem with the cost of a comic book. They only notice it if they feel like they didn't get their money's worth. And that's true for any type of entertainment. So, I always figured, do the drawings that are in your head and that you want to do because that's the best way to communicate with your reader. That never goes out of style...

I'll have very young readers, eight or nine years old still send me letters over Batman, or I'll have acknowledged peers, who've been doing it since the '50's come up and say: 'You're good.' I know it's not because I'm drawing like they did in 1951. I just know that they can relate to what I'm doing, because that same sincerity is there. And I've always found that if people did not know who you were... you were doing something wrong. Maybe that's the Andy Kaufman thing, a reaction please. Just don't sit on your hands. I always found that some artists were so afraid of a negative reaction they wouldn't take a chance any more... I didn't want to get tired of something I loved to do. So, when I turned down projects, I'd love to say it was just a high-minded thing that I didn't want to do Wolverine versus the Hulk or something. It's just that I knew it wouldn't last very long. I knew nobody was really going to care, ultimately. But, they might care about the Aliens thing I did, just as a story. Whether I drew it or not, I knew the story was good enough that it could count. And those are the kinds of stories I always jumped at.

THE FLUTE PLAYER

...AH... EVEN HERE! THEY ARE HERE TOO! AND THEY'VE COVERED THE LAND WITH THEIR DAM-VILLAGES, THEIR MACHINE-HOUSES, THEIR METAL-CAVES...

...*"THEY"* ARE THE OMS... AND THEY ARE STILL SWARMING ON THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH.

YOU WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY HADN'T CHANGED, SO YOU WALKED ACROSS THE CITY .. BREATHING IN THEIR BLAND ODOR .. THE ODOR OF STERILIZED DEATH. YOU FELT AN ANCIENT FEAR RISING IN THEM. . AND AN EQUALLY ANCIENT ANGER IN YOURSELF .

..UNLESS THE ANGER WAS IN THEM .. AND THE FEAR WAS IN YOU...

YOU WALKED ACROSS THE CITY OF THE OMS. AND YOU SAW THAT NOTH NG HAD CHANGED. THEY HADN'T CHANGED AND NEITHER HAD YOU

YOU WENT OUT OF THE CITY AND CROSSED OVER TO THE OPPOSITE BANK, TO THE OTHER EDGE OF THE WORLD WHERE TREES STILL EXIST

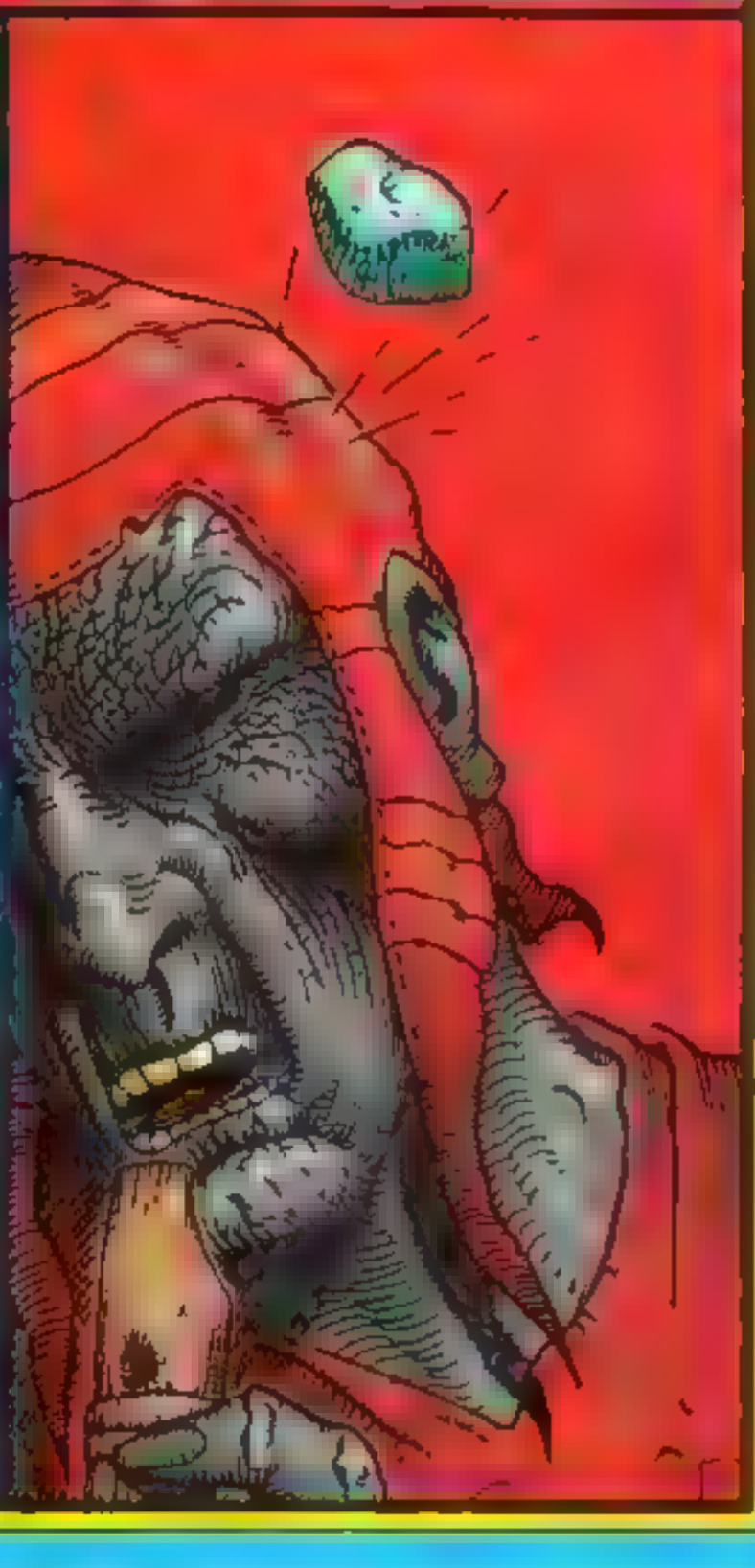
YOU REMEMBERED A VERY ANCIENT BOOK, ONE THAT WAS ALMOST FORGOTTEN.

IT RECOUNTED A LEGEND FROM THE DAYS BEFORE THE OMS, WHEN THERE WERE FLUTES ..

AND FLUTE PLAYERS

YOU WENT BACK TO THE CITY OF THE OMS WITH YOUR FLUTE

AND YOU PLAYED FOR THEM



..BUT OF COURSE IT D'DN'T WORK . YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WOULDN'T A FLUTE CARVED OF ELM .. AS IF YOU HAD THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANOTHER LIFE.. EVEN F T WAS ONLY A TREE'S LIFE . TO PAY THE PRICE OF YOUR HATRED .

PLEASURE IS ALL YOU NEED TO GIVE LIFE . BUT DEATH REQUIRES SUFFERING...

...YOU HAVE TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF...

YOU COULD HAVE GIVEN UP BUT, OF COURSE, IT WAS MUCH TOO LATE, YOU WERE ALREADY QU TE MAD AND HAD BEEN FOR A LONG TIME

YOU WALKED ACROSS THE NIGHT TC A DISTANT PLACE TO MEET WITH A SAGE WHO POSSESSED A FORGOTTEN SCIENCE . AND THERE YOU SAW THE RIFT.

HERE YOU ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF N GHT

YOU HAVE A NEW FLUTE. .

. .AND YOU'RE PLAYING AGA:N..

AND THE EARLY MORNING BREEZE CARR ES YOUR BITTER MUSIC TOWARD THE CITY OF THE OMS

BUT SOMETHING IS HAPPENING NOW...

...THIS TIME, THEY HEAR IT, THEY COME OUT, THEY MOVE...

...THEY FOLLOW YOUR MUSIC...

AND FINALLY, A HORDE OF OMS GATHERS ON THE EDGE OF THE CANAL.

SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY THEY WADE INTO THE MURKY WATERS.

ONE BY ONE, OR IN BUNCHES, WORDLESSLY, THEY LET THEMSELVES S'NK .. AND IN NO TIME, THEY DROWN IN TOTAL S LE■CE.

YOU KEEP PLAY-ING TILL THE LAST OF THE OMS HAS DISAPPEARED.

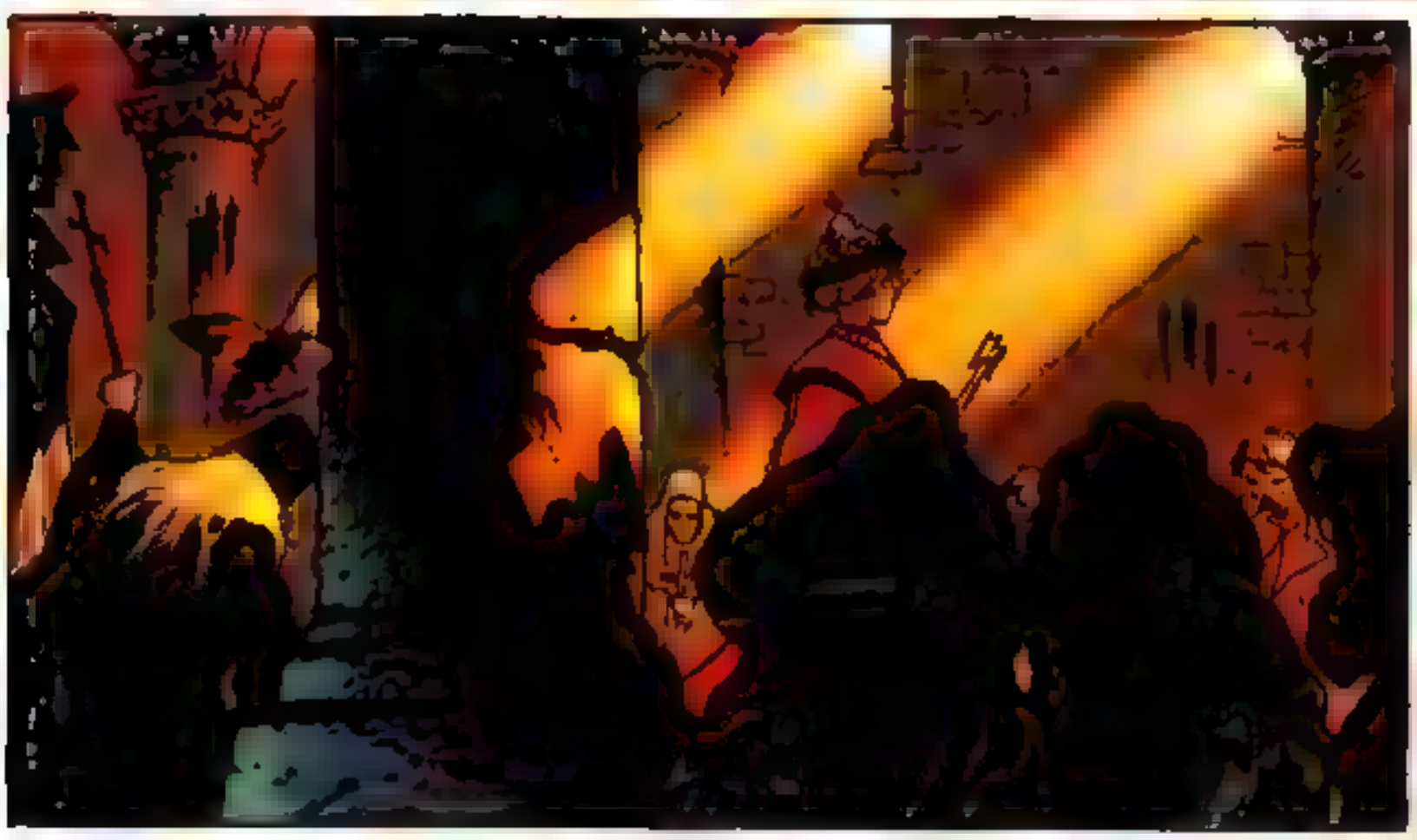
.THEN YOU CAN STOP.

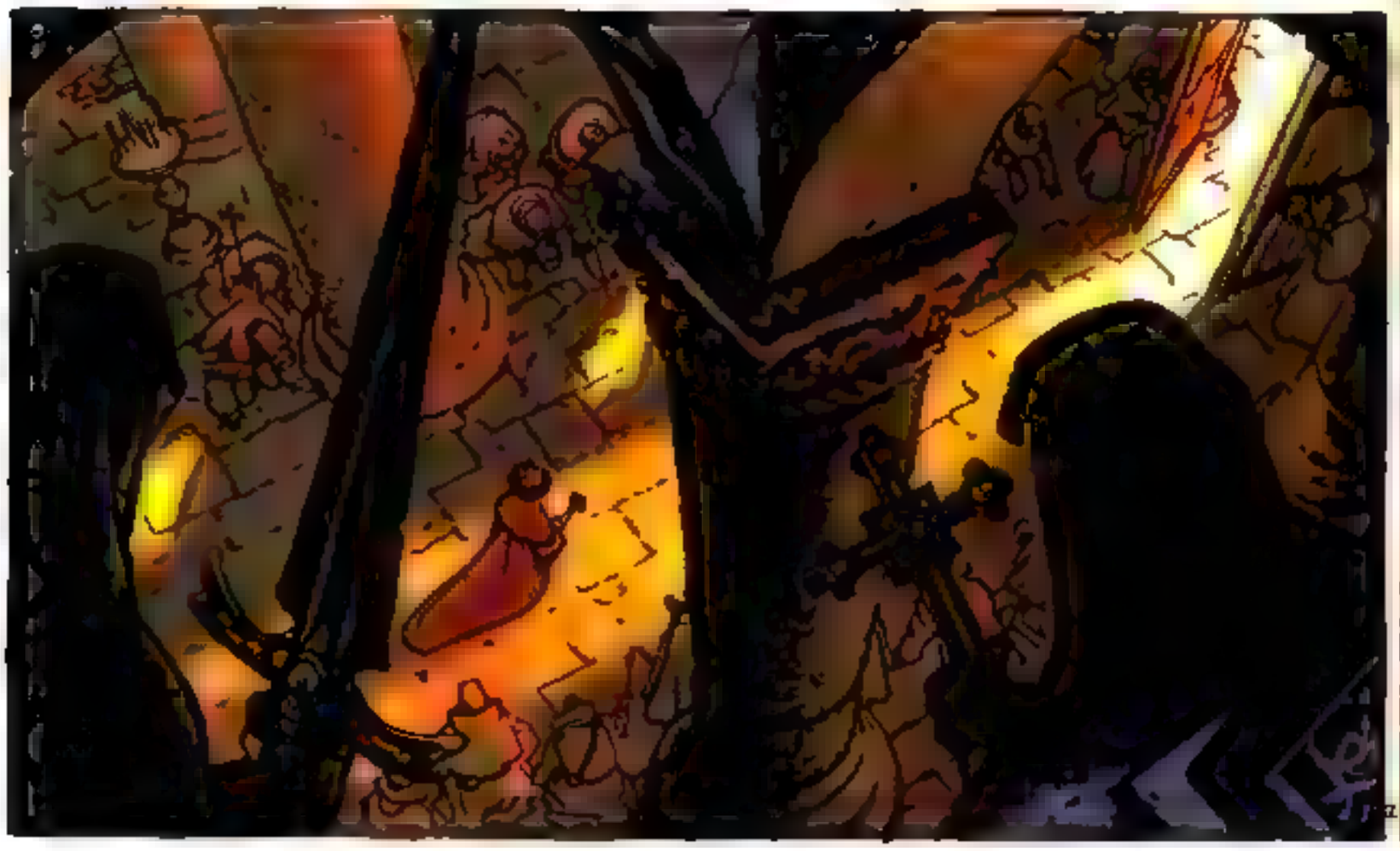
...IT'S TRUE THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANOTHER LIFE... EVEN IF IT WAS ONLY A TREE... TO PAY THE PRICE OF YOUR HATRED... FOR DEATH REQUIRES SUFFERING...

...AND YOU HAVE TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF

CAZA 80

GYPSY- THE DAY OF THE CZAR





LONG LIVE IVAN!

LONG LIVE THE CZAR!

LONG LIVE GREATER RUSSIA!

GO ON! GREET YOUR PEOPLE! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

TSAGOI PUT YOURSELF IN HIS POSITION CROWNED AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN

IN FRONT OF ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCLAIMING HIM AND WHO MAY DIE FOR HIM THIS MORNING

I'M SURE THAT YOUR YOUNG FRIEND WOULD HAPPILY EXCHANGE ALL OF THIS FOR A DENTAL APPOINTMENT

DRACU! IT WOULD BE N'CE IF IT WEREN'T ALL SUCH A SHAMBLES.

AH, STRANGER! COME, WE'LL GIVE YOU WEAPONS AND A UNIFORM.

I HAVE REQUISI-TIONED YOU TO MY UNIT.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE?

NO.

IS HE GOING TO WAR?!

WHAT ABOUT MY SISTER? WHAT'S TO BECOME OF HER?

SHE WILL FOLLOW THE BATTLE FROM HQ, AS HIS MAJESTY COMMANDS.

TSAGOI! I BEG YOU, BE CAREFUL!

DON'T WORRY, LI'L SIS YOU KNOW THE GYPSY, I ALWAYS KEEP A LOW PROFILE.

I'M COUNTING ON YOU, BIG BROTHER!

OKAY, LET'S SEE THOSE GUNS...

AS FOR THE UNIFORM, THE GYPSY SAYS THAT YOU CAN GET STUFFED!

MARINI '94

HISTORY IS IN THE MAKING. NOTHING CAN STOP US NOW!

I HEAR YOU, SABRINA..

HUMM... WE'RE CHANGING DIRECTIONS.

MR. SLOMO WANTS US TO TAKE THE INTERCHANGE FROM THE NORTH TO AVOID PROVOKING THE REFUGEES.

OKAY, GOOD LUCK!... EVERYTHING OKAY UP THERE?

OH MY GOD! I'M NOT USED TO THIS TYPE OF... EXPEDITION...

I SHOULD NEVER HAVE ACCEPTED THIS JOB. I... I'VE HAD A BAD FEELING ABOUT IT FROM THE START!

HELL! WHO IS THAT IDIOT?

WHOSE IDEA WAS IT TO GIVE HIM SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY?

MR. SLOMO, I CAN SEE THE TRUCK...

INFORM OUR MEN ON THE TERRACE. TELL THEM TO SHOOT RIGHT AWAY IF THE REFUGEES REACT BADLY WHEN THEY SEE THE ZEPPELIN.

OKAY, SIR WHAT ABOUT THE TRUCK? .

THE WEST PARKING LOT IS SAFE. TWO GUARDS WILL BE ENOUGH TO WORK THE ELEVATORS. I DON'T WANT ANY SCREWUPS, YOU UNDERSTAND?

THE AMERICAN WEAPONS WILL BE HERE IN HALF AN HOUR

WISH OUR ENEMIES LUCK IF THEY THINK THEY CAN TAKE ZIGANSK!

OBLIVIA!

SO YOU DIDN'T FORGET THE LITTLE GYPSY GIRL, IN SPITE OF THAT HEAVY CROWN?

NO... I DIDN'T FORGET YOU, OBLIVA. THEY PUT GOLD ON MY HEAD... YOUR LIPS PUT IT IN MY HEART!

OH, IVAN!

WHAT WOULD THEY SAY?

IF ONLY THE GIRLS AT THE ORPHANAGE COULD SEE ME NOW...

FOR YEARS I TOLD THEM THAT I WAS THE KING OF ROMANIA'S COUSIN!

...AND THEY BELIEVED ME!

DID THEY REALLY?

...AND HERE I AM IN THE ARMS OF A REAL CROWNED PRINCE, HEIR TO THE ROMANOVS.

AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING, OBLIVIA!

EXACTLY!

...

WHAT IS THIS GAME YOU'RE PLAYING, IVAN? YOUR MEN ARE ON THE RAMPARTS OF ZIGANSK! THE BATTLE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!

DRACU! WE'VE BEEN CLIMBING FOR AGES! ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT MOUNTAIN?

SILENCE, STRANGER!

OKAY. THE GYPSY UNDERSTANDS MESSAGE RECEIVED ROGER

OK.

THE SHARPER THE THORNS THE SWEETER THE ROSE

ARM THE GRAPPLING-HOOKS!

?!

POUF

POUF

POUF

AAAAAAR!

WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!

ALL OF US!

JUST LOOK AT YOURSELVES! LYING DOWN LIKE DOGS! ..

HOW MANY OF US WILL BE ALIVE TOMORROW?

WELL SAID, BROTHER!

WHO WANTS TO HELP US FIGHT AND SAVE HIS SOUL, IF NOT HIS LIFE?

WHO... WHO ARE YOU? AND WHO SENT YOU?

CZAR IVAN, EMPEROR OF GREATER RUSSIA!

UNIT "A" HERE! WE'VE REACHED THE TOP... WHERE ARE YOU, COLONEL?..

I'M WAITING FOR ORDERS FROM HQ. A TRUCK IS ON ITS WAY FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE!

A TRUCK?...

LISTEN TO THIS!

ACCORDING TO COLONEL SULKOFF TWO GUARDS JUST CAME OUT OF THE WEST PARKING LOT!

GOOD GRIEF!

AND THAT'S NOT ALL! "C" POST INFORMS US OF A ZEPPELIN APPROACHING FROM THE NORTH...

SLOMO'S ARMS SHIPMENT! WE HAVE TO ATTACK AT ONCE.

IF THEY UNLOAD THE CARGO BEFORE

BY THE BALLS OF THE GREAT BULIBASH!

IT'S MY TRUCK! IT'S THE STAR!

AH

DON'T DARE TOUCH IT! OR YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER TO ME! I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.

HEY!?

STAY HERE, STRANGER! IF YOU FIGHT WELL, YOU'LL GET YOUR TRUCK BACK!

OKAY, LONG LIVE THE CZAR AND ALL THAT CRAP! WE'LL SEE WHAT WE'LL SEE

LEAD THE WAY, I'LL FOLLOW YOU

FIRE!

WHAT THE...?

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

LONG LIVE THE CZAR!

SHIT!

IT'S THE REBELS!!!

LOOK OUT! TRAITORS!

ARGH

WELL DONE, STRANGER!

HURRY UP! WE'RE BEHIND SCHEDULE!

GET DOWN FROM UP THERE!

IT'S A WOMAN, COLONEL!

WELL, WELL!

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS PENDANT?

THE WHITE WING TOUCHED MY SOUL!

THE WHITE WING TOUCHES THOSE IT CHOOSES.

WHAT CIRCLE ARE YOU FROM? WHAT IS YOUR JOB?

I'M FROM THE THIRD CIRCLE I'M A TRAVELER, A MERCENARY, ALWAYS IN THE SERVICE OF THE WHITE WING WHEN IT NEEDS ME.

THIS WOMAN IS ON OUR SIDE! SHE WILL HELP US TO UNLOAD THE WEAPONS.

RIGHT, COLONEL!

GOOD HEAVENS! THE ZEPPELIN IS COMING ALONG-SIDE! WHAT ARE THEY DOING UP THERE?

GET BACK! GO BACK DOWN!

FOOD !

THEY'RE WEAPONS. THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU HERE

LOOK UP THERE!

FOOD!

WE'RE SAVED!

MERCY!

ALL GOES AS PLANNED I'M CALLING BIRGIT

GO AHEAD, BABE... SUCK UP TO THE BOSS. WE'LL UNLOAD THE MATERIAL.

IT'S ABOUT TIME.

RATATATATA

ATATAT

SABRINA?

ATATATATATATAK

?!?

KRAZIIIN

AAAH!

LONG LIVE THE CZAR! DEATH TO THE TRAITORS!

RATATA

TATAK

SABRINA! WHAT'S GOING ON?

RATATATATATA

REGROUP! MAKE THEM RETREAT!

RATATATATATATA

RATATATATATATA

RATA

BAMBAM

RATATATATATATATATATATATATAK

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BOOM

NO KIDDING?! WHO HAVE WE HERE?!

IT'S THAT SCUM-BAG, GYPSY!

THIS TIME YOU'RE MINE, SHITHEAD!

BLAM

CRACK

BLAM

YOU OKAY, STRANGER?

RATATA

AAAH!

YUP!

I'LL FEEL EVEN BETTER IN A MINUTE!

SHIT! I'VE BEEN HIT IN THE ARM!!

SO, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT WANTS A PIECE OF THE GYPSY?!

AGH!

BLAM BLAM

IT'S OUR TURN TO SWITCH ON THE TH-THUNDER NOW!

BRATATATATA-

RATATATATATATATATA

WELL, HERE'S ALL OF ME .. YOU HAPPY NOW?

YEAAH!

BOOM

SHIT! THE ZEPPELIN!

LOOK OUT!

AMUNITION DANGER EXPLOSIVES M 985-7 345

US

KRAK

KRAK

FUCK!

THE ZEPPELIN! THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!

SHIT! SHIT!

KRAK

AAAAHH

BRAK

THEY'RE SURREN-DERING!

WE'VE TAKEN ZIGANSK!

WELL DONE, KATIA!

CAPTAIN, STORM THE BUILDING... AND BRING ME SLOMO'S HEAD!

SLOMO? HE'S DOWN HERE, COLONEL SULKOFF... AMONG THE CRATES!

IS THAT A FACT?

BLAM

BLAM

SHOW NO MERCY FOR THE TRAITORS!

DRACU! YOU REALLY LIKE TAKING ORDERS FROM THIS SHIT?

IT'S A JOB!

MR SLOMO AND HIS FAMOUS AMERICAN GUNS!

AN IRONIC END, DON'T YOU THINK?

AMUNITION

FROM RUSSIA WITH .

WAIT! .

YOU CAN KILL HIM LATER...

I'VE DREAMED OF DOING THIS FOR SUCH A LONG TIME!

AAAAH!

PSSSSHH

AAARGH

BLAM

DRACU! THIS IS STRANGER THAN FICTION!

WE DON'T HAVE REVOLUTIONS BECAUSE THEY'RE PRETTY, GYPSY!...

BUT BECAUSE THEY'RE JUST!

HUM! THE GYPSY IS HAPPY IF HE CAN AVOID RESTING HIS BUTT ON A BED OF NAILS. AND SOMETIMES, EVEN THAT ISN'T TOO EASY!

I KNOW. I'M BEGINNING TO RESPECT THAT POINT OF VI

HEY! GYPSY! COULD YOU G-GIMME A HAND, HERE?

BY THE MOANING OF PREPUBESCENT VIRGINS! IS THIS HOW THEY SMOKE HAM IN THIS TOWN?

C-CUT THE C-CRAP, GYPSY, MY H-HANDS ARE SLIPPING!

SO, LET GO, BIG BEN. YOU THINK I REALLY GIVE A FUCK?

SHIT! YOU C-CAN'T DO THIS TO AN OLD F-FRIEND, US T-TRUCKERS GOTTA HELP EACH OTHER!

WHAT TRUCKERS? HEY, E.T. CALL HOME! YOU THINK ALL EARTHLINGS ARE ASSHOLES?

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE WORD "TRUCKER" MEANS! YOU BIG HEAP OF SELMER SHIT!

YOU'VE NO IDEA WHAT IT'S LIKE TO DRIVE STRAIGHT DOWN THE ROAD, FREE AS THE WIND, AND WITHOUT HAVING TO TAKE ANY SHIT FROM ANYONE.

HUH? OUCH!

YOU'RE A REAL SHIT, GYPSY! I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THAT ASPHALT RIBBON FOR THIRTY YEARS. TEN YEARS IN A C3C!

IF YOU LEAVE ME HERE TO DIE, MY HEADLIGHTS WILL BLIND YOU IN YOUR REAR-VIEW MIRROR FOR THE REST OF YOUR FUCKIN' LIFE.

GYPSY!

HUH?

OKAY, OKAY! DON'T MOVE... WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF THERE!

YOU BETTER NOT FORGET THIS HANDSHAKE, TRUCKER!

I SWEAR IT ON MY LIFE, TRUCKER!

HA HA HA! AND ALL THIS HAS CURED YOU OF YOUR STUTTER!

HOT DAMN! YOU'RE RIGHT! HO HO HO! FUCKIN' GYP...

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.. I REALLY THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD-N'T..

HELLO, BIG BEN!

ARR... I'LL BE DAMNED!...

MS. SELMER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

HUH?

MS. SELMER!?

DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE HER? IT'S THE SELMER WOMAN! BURMA SELMER WHO THEY'VE BEEN LOOK NG FOR, FOR YEARS!

YOU... YOU'RE BURMA SELMER? THE HEIRESS?...

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME SAY SO? I USED TO BOUNCE HER ON MY KNEE WHEN SHE WAS A KID. I DON'T THINK I COULD BE WRONG!

WE EVEN SWEATED THROUGH A FEW WALTZES TOGETHER AT THE COMPANY BALL. D'YOU REMEMBER?

YES, BIG BEN. I REMEMBER VERY WELL...

BUT WE'LL REMINISCE LATER FOR THE MOMENT, EXCUSE ME!

WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED

DO YOU THINK WE HAVE A SHOT AT THE 15 MILLION?

SHIT, GYPSY! CAN'T YOU THINK OF ANY-THING BUT MONEY?

DUNNO, NEVER TRIED.

THE CZAR IS COMING! IVAN IS HERE!

LONG LIVE THE CZAR!
LONG LIVE IVAN!

THAT'S FUNNY! THAT LITTLE GIRL UP THERE I THINK I'VE SEEN HER SOMEWHERE BEFORE.

ASSHOLE! THAT'S MY SISTER!

RAT-TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

C'MON YOU TWO! WE'RE REGROUPING AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER!

THE INTERCHANGE IS OURS! THE CIVILIANS SURRENDERED WITH NO RESISTANCE...

AH!?

...AND I HAVE NEWS OF YOUR TRUCK, GYPSY!

IT WAS INTERCEPTED AT THE ENTRANCE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GUY THAT STOLE IT FROM YOU DISAPPEARED IN THE CONFUSION.

BUT WASN'T THE DRIVER A WOMAN?

I SAY, THE EMPEROR SEEMS VERY TAKEN BY YOUR SISTER! IT COULD GET COMPLICATED, YOU KNOW...

THE MIXTURE IS GETTING A BT TOO R CH FOR THE ENGINE

YEAH! MAYBE IT'S TIME TO GET OLTTA HERE .

ACCORDING TO COLONEL SULKOFF, IT WAS A MAN. DOES IT MATTER?

HUM!

DAMN IT! DAMN IT! DAMN IT!

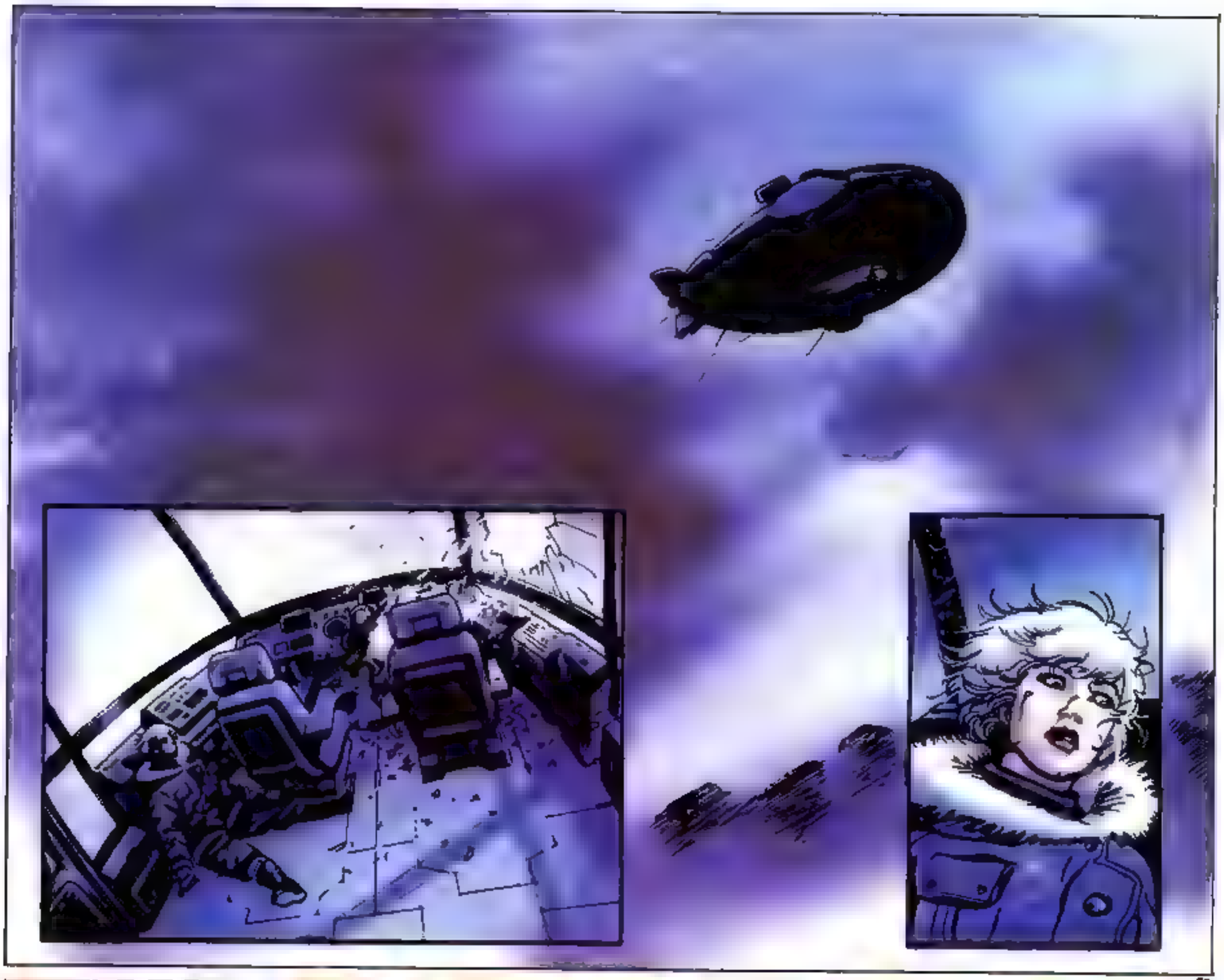
ON THE OTHER HAND, SEVERAL RUSSIAN AGEN- CES HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT ZIGANSK HAS BEEN TAKEN BY CZARIST REBELS! DO YOU WANT ME TO TRANSM T THE R RELEASES?

YES, GO AHEAD!

ANY NEWS OF THE TRACKING SATELLITE?

THE SIGNAL IS MOVING SOUTH- SOUTHWEST, INTO THE WIND, MS. MATTEN!

OH SHIT! SABR NA! ALL THIS IS MY FAULT! IT'S ALL MY FAULT!



THE CZAR!

LONG LIVE RUSSIA!

LONG LIVE IVAN!

. .I SUGGEST THAT WE EVACUATE THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND SEND THEM TO OUR VILLAGES WHERE OUR PEOPLE WILL CARE FOR THEM.

I KNOW! BUT RUSSIA HAS A HEART AND THEY HAVE HEARD T BEATING TODAY

NOT SO FAST! THIS SORT OF THING HAS TO BE DISCUSSED!

MOST OF THEM ARE TRAITORS IN THE PAY OF FOREIGN COMPANIES!

GENTLEMEN, TIME IS OF ESSENCE. THE REFUGEES IN ZIGANSK ARE LIVING IN DESPERATE CONDITIONS...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 105

A VISIT IN AMIENS

(An unpublished memoir by Raymond Roussel.)

Amiens. April 13, 1899. I can't wait to meet the great writer Jules Verne, whose works I have admired for so long. I can't believe my luck! I have been sent to his hometown for the duration of my military service...

I suppose I should have informed him of my forthcoming visit, but I feel that an inexplicable force propelled me to surprise him. And I should add that I was also afraid of being rejected. His work has always fascinated me and gripped me with its enigmatic power, making me feel that this inevitable encounter should be shrouded in a veil of mystery.

After the show, I'll walk along the promenade, keeping clear of the bushes in the park, for fear of being accosted.

Dressed in my infantryman's uniform of the 72nd Regiment, I will doubtless be mistaken for a deserter... The pathetic prestidigitator reminds me of the one at the Luna-Park near Paris! He seems to be staring straight at me... I suppose it must be my nerves...

But... he is talking to me! He seems to be pointing to my jacket with his wand... But why?

Yet, just a moment ago, there was nothing there! And now, there's a paper flower... The whole audience — although it's a pretty small one — stares at me... The Captain is going to regret his decision for having given me permission to attend the show!

That chimney has a strange shape... What could it possibly be used for? But let me look at the flower...

It seems to be unfolding!

As if in a dream, I walk down the tree-lined avenue leading to Jules Verne's house. At the corner of Charles Dubois Street, I'm fascinated by a bust of the famous inventor Charles Dallery... Here I am!

But what is this glow...? And that rumbling noise that seems to surround me? Could it be a late train?...

Yesterday at the local library, I reread parts of some of my favorite novels by Verne, The Mysterious Island, Twenty-Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, Captain Hatteras, and Hector Servadac...

Will I find the right words to express my admiration for the great man? And will he understand the extent to which his writing has influenced me?

Perhaps I should have brought a copy of my poem "The Squabble". The very thought of this encounter makes me tremble with fear... yet a mysterious force incites me not to procrastinate any longer... Let's see, the main entrance is on this side of the house... But...

What's this? Some strange figures seem to be floating down the side of the tower. And the glow seems brighter... Someone seems to be opening the window on the second floor...

It is he! Yes, it is Jules Verne! But what are those men wearing? And what are they doing here at this late hour? Could the writer be in danger? It's impossible! What about his wife, his servants?

Suddenly I feel hot, I start to perspire and my legs seem to buckle under me. If only I could get closer. Let's see... the gate isn't locked. I can go in.

Is Jules Verne in danger? On the contrary, the arrival of these mysterious visitors seems to put him at ease, almost as if he has been waiting for them.

All this is very unexpected for me. But what are they doing? Ah! They're going into the house, and the window shuts behind them.

My curiosity gets the better of me. I go in through the door of the verandah which is ajar.

I fumble in the dark. Here the heat seems less unbearable, but the rumbling persists.

I walk up the stairs on tiptoe. Now I can hear their voices, but they are speaking a language that I can't understand. Is Jules Verne talking? If only I could see what is going on! I'll open this window.

There we go. So what are they doing? There are some strange-looking objects on the writer's worktable. What could they be? Jules Verne seems to be delighted. He seems to be thanking his guests.

Now they are making strange gestures. Could they be saying goodbye to him? They are going back toward the window.

Jules Verne waves to them, evidently with infinite gratitude. They rise into the air with great ease as if gravity had no hold on them. The glow brightens.

Oh my God, I've knocked over a large vase... and Jules Verne sees me. He is furious. He comes toward me and asks me what I am doing in his house...

"You're spying on me, young man! Would you be a friend of that scoundrel Gaston?" I deny it at once. "I'm just a young writer presently in barracks at Amiens who wants nothing more than to meet his favorite writer and express his admiration."

"You say your name is Mr. Roussel? I read one of your poems in Le Gallois. Strange style... Really very strange. Come, I'm happy to make your acquaintance, young colleague, ah! ah!" He's suddenly become friendly. He seems very changeable. He takes me to his study.

"So the cat's out of the bag. I knew this would happen. So fate has chosen you, Mr. Roussel, to be the one who would share my secret."

What is he trying to say? He points to the cylindrical objects on his worktable. "You see those? They were brought to me by the 'people' that you saw with me. The cylinders enclose a sort of papyrus containing parts of a text written in a language that is unknown to humans, like us.

"As I decipher the text, using a code that I have been given, it is transformed into what I write. The secret of my novels has never yet been discovered.

COLLECTION J. HETZEL & Cie

I can no longer contain myself. "Yes, Mr. Verne, I knew it! I came here to tell you that I have always thought of your books as vast and fabulous coded messages! Of course I didn't understand why..." He looks at me kindly, almost affectionately. And I have an immense feeling of well-being. Stars seem to light up in front of our eyes, which shall only be extinguished at the end of the universe.

Jules Verne seems relieved of a great weight. We are both filled with happiness, an almost mystical joy. He takes me in his arms. "My son, my son," he whispers softly, and I do believe he is sobbing.

Then we sit in his high chairs. Jules Verne points to the bookcases filled with his books. "These books are my whole life. Nothing else counts in the midst of this shipwreck." "I fully understand." I feel a lump in my throat.

He carries on: "Twice a year, the visitors that you saw — and know this, my young friend, that your presence could not have been unknown to them! — bring me the basic material for my work; the rest is nothing but imagination. When I think of the reviews written about my work in the press... believe me, those journalists are nothing but pedantic ignoramuses!"

Then he asks me to tell him about myself and what I do. I talk to him about my poems and my ambitions. He seems very interested, perhaps more so than he openly expresses.

Soon daylight breaks through the darkness of night. Plunged in our conversation, we've let ourselves be surprised by the passing of time. I get up. Mr. Jules Verne must be very tired. In a somber voice he says, "Mr. Roussel, please promise me that you will never tell anyone what you have witnessed here tonight..." "Mr. Jules Verne, please allow me to say what happened posthumously." He nods slowly. "I grant you that... my young friend." I say goodbye to Mr. Verne.

As I walk back to my barracks along quiet paths that lend themselves to introspection, I slowly begin to realize the significance of the night's events. My visit to Mr. Verne seems to have been a strange meeting with Fate, and I feel that my destiny is sealed. Now the message communicated to me by the magician becomes very clear.

A few months later, in Paris, shortly after the publication of my poem "The Squabble," I too would play host to mediators from beyond space and time.

THE COMMITMENT

MY DEAREST EDEA, IN JUST THREE DAYS' TIME YOU WILL COME OF AGE AND YOU WILL RULE OVER THE KINGDOM OF ANDARK.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO IT WILL KEEP ME FROM BE-NG WITH YOU, SO I DON'T WANT TO RULE OVER ANDARK.

IT'S THE LAW, AND IT WAS YOUR FATHER'S LAST WISH BEFORE HE DIED.

DO YOU MISS HIM?

I HAVE YOU TO REMIND ME OF HIM.

THIS SEEMS LIKE A GOOD PLACE TO REST.

YOU SHOULDN'T STOP IF YOU WISH TO SAVE THE PRINCESS

PUT DOWN YOUR SWORD. I DON'T WANT YOU WAVING IT AT ME

AND WHO MAY YOU BE?

IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU'RE A KNIGHT, AREN'T YOU? WE DON'T GET MANY OF THEM AROUND HERE ANYMORE.

YOUR DUTY IS TO SAVE PRINCESS EDEA. EVER SINCE HER FATHER'S DEATH, HER STEP-MOTHER HAS RULED OVER THE LAND, AND THEY SAY SHE HAS A PACT WITH THE FORCES OF DARKNESS... THE YOUNG PRINCESS IS UNDER HER SPELL, BUT SHE WILL COME OF AGE IN THREE DAYS AND THEN SHE WILL ACCEDE TO THE THRONE..

BUT THAT WILL NEVER COME TO PASS, FOR HER STEP-MOTHER WILL HAVE HER KILLED FIRST.

WAIT... TELL ME WHAT THE TESTS ARE!

YOU WILL KNOW SOON ENOUGH!

. UNLESS SOMEONE CAN STOP THE EVIL WOMAN... AND YOU ARE THAT SOMEONE.

SO YOU CAN'T STOP HERE... YOU STILL HAVE THREE DIFFICULT TESTS TO PASS BEFORE YOU CAN ENTER THE CASTLE.

HELP! SAVE ME!

WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE...?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

THANK YOU... THANK YOU, NOBLE SIR...

I HOPE THIS WILL CLOTHE YOUR NAKEDNESS

OH, IT'S NOT NECESSARY

I WISH TO REWARD YOU..

WHAT. ?

WE'LL MAKE MAD LOVE TOGETHER .. THAT WILL BE YOUR REWARD TAKE ME IN YOUR ARMS

AAAAHHH

OHHH... IT'S YOU. . I WAS ASLEEP...

I WAS JUST ADMIR NG YOU... YOU'RE SO BEAJTIFUL

YOUR HANDS ARE COLD. COME AND LIE DOWN WITH ME.

ORDENA?

THAT'S GREAT. YOU'RE A GOOD STONEMASON. BUT REMEMBER: NO ONE, ABSOLUTELY NO ONE, MUST KNOW ABOUT THIS. YOUR LIFE WILL DEPEND ON IT.

I WILL TELL NO ONE, MY LADY.

NO, IT CAN'T BE... IT CAN'T BE MY TOMBSTONE! IT SAYS I DIED BEFORE ..

...COMING OF AGE

WHOA! WHOA!

THE GATES OF HELL HAVE OPENED WIDE. .

...BUT NOT EVEN THE HOUNDS OF HADES CAN KEEP ME AWAY!

GO BACK TO HELL WHERE YOU BELONG!

PLEASE SAVE ME! SOMEONE MUST KNOW THAT MY LIFE IS IN DANGER!

I SHOULD HIDE... I ONLY HAVE A FEW HOURS LEFT TO LIVE.

NO ONE CAN PASS.

GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM AND I'LL FORGET THAT I EVER SAW YOU.

GET OUT OF MY WAY, UNLESS YOU WISH TO TEST THE COLD STEEL OF MY SWORD.

I SAID YOU CAN'T COME IN.

HE'S VERY STRONG.

FIGHT HIM OFF, FA THFUL DROUT!

PRINCESS?

NEVER TURN ROUND IN A FIGHT ..

. ESPECIALLY IF IT'S A FIGHT TO THE DEATH...

NO... YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ATTACKED HIM. HE'S COME TO SAVE ME.

WHAT A MOVING SCENE.

YOU DIDN'T THINK SOMEONE WOULD COME TO PUT A STOP TO YOUR EVIL PLANS.

YOUR WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC SPELLS HAVE BEEN USE-LESS. YOU'RE IN MY HANDS NOW.

IT'S TRUE THAT I WANT YOU DEAD SO THAT I CAN STAY IN POWER BUT I CAN'T KILL YOU MYSELF BECAUSE IF I DO, A CURSE WILL FALL ON ME AND ALL MY DESCENDANTS.

THAT'S HER. . THAT'S MY STEP-MOTHER. SHE WANTS TO KILL ME SO THAT SHE CAN CONTINUE TO RULE OVER THE LAND

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

...ENOUGH TALK!

I THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T GET HERE IN TIME.

IT WASN'T EASY GETTING HERE. YOUR DEAD HUSBAND LEFT THINGS IN A MESS.

HE WAS A GREAT WIZARD AND I BENEFITED FROM HIS TEACHINGS, BUT ALL THAT IS IN THE PAST.

IN TWO WEEKS I WILL CHOOSE ANOTHER HUSBAND AND THE KINGDOM WILL NOT OPPOSE ME.

AND SO IT WOULD COME TO PASS THAT A SIMPLE KNIGHT WOULD RULE THE KINGDOM BY HER SIDE.

SPRING FEVER

THIS IS SILVINA MAHLER REPORTING FOR WST FROM THE VERY HEART OF THE FRINGE.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM UNKNOWN CONTAGIOUS DISEASES WE'VE HAD TO TURN TO SUCH EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AS ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATORY UNITS...

REC

..BUT WE HAVE REFUSED TO LEAVE. OUR ON-THE-SPOT TV CREW WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF ALL THE LATE-BREAKING EVENTS.

WE ARE REPORTING FROM AN AREA WHERE ONLY FRINGIES CAN SURVIVE.

AS YOU KNOW, THE FRINGIES LACKED THE CAPACITY TO INHABIT THE SELF-SUFFICIENT DOMES, SO THEY TOOK REFUGE HERE AND ADAPTED TO THE STRANGE ENVIRONMENT THAT YOU CAN OBSERVE ALL AROUND US

THE FRINGIES' MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME COMES FROM THE SALE OF THEIR OWN VITAL ORGANS WHICH ARE RENOWNED FOR THEIR RESISTANCE, AND HENCE ARE GREATLY SOUGHT AFTER ON THE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL MARKETPLACE.

BUT WE AREN'T HERE TO TALK ABOUT ORGAN SALES. INSTEAD, WE HAVE COME TO WITNESS AN ANNUAL EVENT THAT OCCURS ON EXACTLY THE SAME DATE AND THAT HAS BECOME KNOWN AS THE "CETACEAN EFFECT."

VRRMMMMMMMMM

IT IS CAUSED BY A MINOR PHENOMENON THAT TRIGGERS A SERIES OF EVENTS WITH FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES SINCE IT AFFECTS AT LEAST ONE THIRD OF THE ADULT SPECIMENS.

WE MUST MAKE SURE THAT OUR CAMERAS DETECT THE MINUTE PHENOMENON THAT TRIGGERS THE AMAZING SHOW...

...BEFORE THE FRINGIES NOTICE IT...

LUCKILY, THE NATIVES ARE BUSY RIGHT NOW, SINCE THIS IS THE TIME OF DAY WHEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDES THEM WITH THEIR DAILY RATIONS.

...SO THAT WE CAN SHOW OUR TV AUDIENCES THE COMPLETE CYCLE OF THE "CETACEAN EFFECT."

SO WHILE OUR CAMERAS ARE SEARCHING FOR THAT MINOR NATURAL PHENOMENON...

...THE FRINGIES ARE FIGHTING OVER THE CAPSULES OF SYNTHETIC FOOD SUBSTITUTE WHICH ARE LACED WITH A GENEROUS DOSE OF HYPNOVALPAX...

...THE SUBSTANCE THAT KEEPS PEACE IN THIS AREA, WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE THE SCENE OF VIOLENCE AND TOTAL CHAOS.

WOW! IT SEEMS THAT CAMERA NUMBER 12 HAS FOUND SOMETHING!

LET'S GO AND CHECK IT OUT!

AS YOU CAN SEE, WE ARE LOOKING AT A MUTANT DAISY, THE ONLY PLANT THAT KEEPS TRYING TO GROW, OVER AND OVER AGAIN, HERE ON THE FRINGE.

NOW WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THE FRINGIES DISCOVER IT IN THE COURSE OF THEIR CONSTANT WANDERINGS.

AND WHEN THEY DO, THE SHOW WILL BEGIN WITH A CRESCENDO OF STRANGE REACTIONS WHICH WILL END WITH THE RACE TOWARDS THE "CETACEAN EFFECT."

ONE OF THEM HAS SEEN IT! THE FRINGIE HAS SEEN IT!

HE'S SHOUTING! LISTEN! JUST LISTEN TO HOW HE SHOUTS, CALLING OUT TO HIS PEERS!

A FLOWER! LOOKIT! A FLOWER!

AS CAMERA NUMBER 7 SHOWS US, SOME OF THE FRINGIES ARE NOT REACTING AT ALL BECAUSE THEY'VE ALREADY HAD THEIR TRANQUILIZING LUNCH.

FLOWER!! LISTEN? A FLOWER!!

THE NEWS IS SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE ALL THROUGH THE AREA, AND ALL THE FRINGIES WHO ARE STILL LUCID ENOUGH...

...ARE RUNNING DESPERATELY TO CATCH THE SHOW.

LOOK AT THE WAY THEY MOVE, LOOK AT THE STRANGE EXPRESSIONS ON THEIR FACES.

THEY LOOK AS IF THEY ARE CRYING WITHOUT TEARS. AS YOU KNOW, THE OXIDIZING WINDS HAVE DRIED OUT THEIR TEAR DUCTS AND MADE THEM VERY NEARSIGHTED...

BUT THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK...

THE RITUAL DANCE AROUND THE FLOWER IS STARTING!...

AND, AS USUAL, THE DAISY'S EXISTENCE WILL BE...

...VERY BRIEF...

WATCH CAREFULLY NOW! THE FINAL ACT OF THIS STRANGE ANNUAL RITUAL IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.

IT ALWAYS OCCURS ON THE SAME DAY

AFTER LACERATING THEMSELVES WITH THEIR OVER-GROWN FINGERNAILS, AS IF THE DAISY'S DEATH HAD CAUSED THEM GREAT SUFFERING..

.. THEY BREAK INTO A FRENZIED RUN.

...AND A MAD RACE BEGINS, AS CAMERA 21 SHOWS...

..CAMERA 36 PROVIDES US WITH AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE RACE.

THEY DASH TO THE OUTER REACHES OF THE FRINGE WHERE THE MOUNTAIN OF REFUSE SUDDENLY COMES TO AN END...

BUT THEY DON'T STOP HERE. THEY KEEP ON RUNNING UNTIL THEY THROW THEMSELVES OFF THE EDGE.

THEY BEHAVE MUCH AS DYING WHALES USED TO DO WHEN THEY KEPT ON HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE COAST...

...AND ENDED UP DYING ON THE BEACH UNDER THE BURNING SUN.

WATCH CAREFULLY NOW. WE'RE REACHING THE CLIMAX!

WATCH THEIR EXPRESSIONS ..

. OF EXCITEMENT ..

...AND RELIEF...

...AS IF THEY'D REACHED THE END OF A LONG JOURNEY.

THESE ARE THE LAST PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STRANGE RITUAL AND...

...CRASH! SHE IS THE VERY LAST RUNNER IN TH S UNUSUAL MARATHON.

SOME WILL TAKE A WHILE TO DIE, BUT FATAL INFECTIONS DEVELOP VERY QUICKLY IN THESE PARTS.

THAT'S IT! THE FINAL DEATH RATTLE OF THE LAST PARTICIPANT BRINGS THIS YEAR'S "CETACEAN EFFECT" TO A CLOSE.

SO THAT BRINGS OUR REPORT TO AN END.

THIS IS SILVINA MAHLER S GNING OFF FROM THE OUTER EDGES OF THE FRINGE. WST WILL CONTINUE ITS NORMAL BROADCASTING FROM THE STUDIO GOODBYE FROM ME AND THE WHOLE CREW IT IS MARCH 21 AND WE ALL WISH YOU...

...A VERY HAPPY FIRST DAY OF SPRING.

COLONIZER SPACE-SHIP "PIZARRO"

CREW MEMBERS 4

PIZARRO ENTERTAINMENT

Presents: Conquistadores

AT LAST!

CAPTAIN DE ARLES RODRIGUEZ, 54: RANK OF CAPTAIN ACHIEVED BY CORRESPON-DENCE.

I HAVE ALREADY RUN OUT OF EXPLOSIVE SANI-TARY TOWELS!

SOLDIER GAZCON Y PEDRO 22: HOOKED ON VIDEO-GAMES.

COULD YOU STIR THE SAUCE?

LIEUTENANT CARDENAS JUANITA, 30, THE ONLY FEMALE CREW MEMBER: NYMPHOMANIAC.

PLEASE JUANITA, JUST RELAX!

ENRESTO CORTEZ, COOK, 45: EX-BOXER, EX-CONVICT WITH A SOFT SPOT FOR FRENCH CUISINE.

SUPERVISION AND COORDINATION: TENUTA STUDIO

Story and Pencils: Ricci Colors: Bacchio

BUZZ... THIS IS YOUR CAPTAIN SPEAKING ... EVERYBODY TO THE CONTROL ROOM...

VRRR

VRRR

DAMN! THEY'RE COMING OVER HERE!

I ALMOST FINISHED THIS LEVEL!

THEY'RE GONNA GIVE US A NEW TASK!

FUCK YOU!

THIS TIME IT'LL BE EASY SAILING AND I'LL DEMAND RESPECT AND PROFESSIONALISM OF MY CREW.

DON'T YOU GREET YOUR SUPERIORS ANYMORE?

MIND MY PLAYING WITH YOUR JOYSTICK, BABY?

YES... LIEU-TENANT.

CORTEZ, STOP READING THAT BOOK! SOLDIER ADJUST YOUR UN FORM!

AND YOU, JUANITA, COMB YOUR HAIR!

CLICK

ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?

LET'S GET STARTED!

INCA, SEND THE MESSAGE NOW!

DESTINATION: PLANET OBERON

COLONIZE AND SUBDUE THE POPULATION

DATA ON THE PLANET: NO IMPORTANT INFO.

DATA ON THE POPULATION: IMPORTANT! PAY ATTENTION TO BUZZZ

MESSAGE INTERRUPTED, MEMORY NOT AVAILABLE.

THE SYSTEM WILL SWITCH OVER TO TEMPORARY MODE.

IT WAS YOU, WASN'T IT?

MEEE?

AHAHAHA

SOLDIER, DELETE THAT STUFF IMMEDIATELY!

YES, SIR!

CAPTAIN, WHY ARE YOU GET-TING SO MAD?

YOU DIDN'T LOOK THAT BAD IN THE PHOTO!

JUANITA, STOP IT WITH THOSE INSINUATIONS!!

AH AH AH AH AH AH AH

... YOUR SKIN TONE WAS EVEN HEALTHIER LOOKING!

STOP IT, STOP IT. I SAID STOP IT!

AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH

YIP!

YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP

LANDING OPERATION COMPLETED SIR!

YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP

SOLDIER, OPEN UP THE HATCH...

AND SWITCH ON THE BIG SCREEN

I CLAIM THIS PLANET IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR FERNANDEZ DE CASTILLO!

FROM TODAY ON, HE'LL BE YOUR LORD, AND YOU ..

HIS SLAVES!

YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP

DO YOU THINK THEY GOT IT?

LEAD THE WAY, PEDRO!

YIP YIP YIP YIP YIP

WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?

WELCOME US!

THEY TOOK PEDRO'S BLASTER AWAY!

RELAX CAPTAIN!

TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM

HEY! THIS PLACE IS JUMPING! IT'S EVEN BETTER THAN THE XARA'S COLONIES!

WE DIDN'T COME TO HAVE FUN!

HI!

YIP YIP YIP YIP

SOLDIER, COME BACK HERE IMMEDIATELY!

YIP! YIP!

SINCE YOU DIDN'T FOLLOW MY ORDERS, YOU'LL GET 10 MONTHS IN THE SLAMMER!

HEEY!!

WHAT A HUNK!

LIEUTENANT, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO DO?

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.

ERNESTO, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU AND ME ARE ALL ALONE AND...?

WHEN I GET BACK TO BASE I'LL ASK TO BE GIVEN A NEW CREW!

TUM TUM TUM TUM TU

NOT LONG AFTER

PLEASE, THINK ABOUT THE MISS ON.

A FEW HOURS LATER

SENORITA, BUT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

EVEN LATER

I AM SO EXHAUSTED!

YOU'RE TELLING ME.

WHAT ABOUT THE CAPTAIN??

HE'S SLEEPING IN A HUT NEARBY

IT'S THE ONLY GOOD IDEA HE'S HAD TODAY

LOOKS LIKE AN ANGEL, DON'T HE?

I GUESS WE BETTER GET SOME SHUT EYE TOO!

RONF RONF RONF

C'MON!

OK!

RONF RONF

TUM TUM

SLEEP WELL!

YOU TOO!

ARE THEY EVER GOING TO STOP PLAYING?

TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM TUM

RONF RONF RONF RONF

RONF RONF RONF

BUT

WHERE AM I?

CLICK!

I NEED SOME LIGHT

HEY GUYS, IS THAT ONE OF YOUR DAMN TRICKS?

IF YOU DON'T OPEN RIGHT NOW, YOU'LL BE PUNISHED!

CLICK

SOMETHING IS FALLING THROUGH THE BOARDS!

IT LOOKS LIKE EARTH!

EARTH!

AAAAA

TUMP TUMP

RESETTING COMPLETED

MEMORY AVAILABLE TO COMPLETE MESSAGE.

IMPORTANT, PAY ATTENTION.

THE METABOLISM OF THE INHABITANTS OF PLANET OBERON S SIMILAR TO THAT OF EARTHLINGS.

ONE DIFFERENCE THEY DON'T NEED SLEEP

IF YOU SLEEP IN THEIR PRESENCE, THEY WILL THINK YOU ARE DEAD.

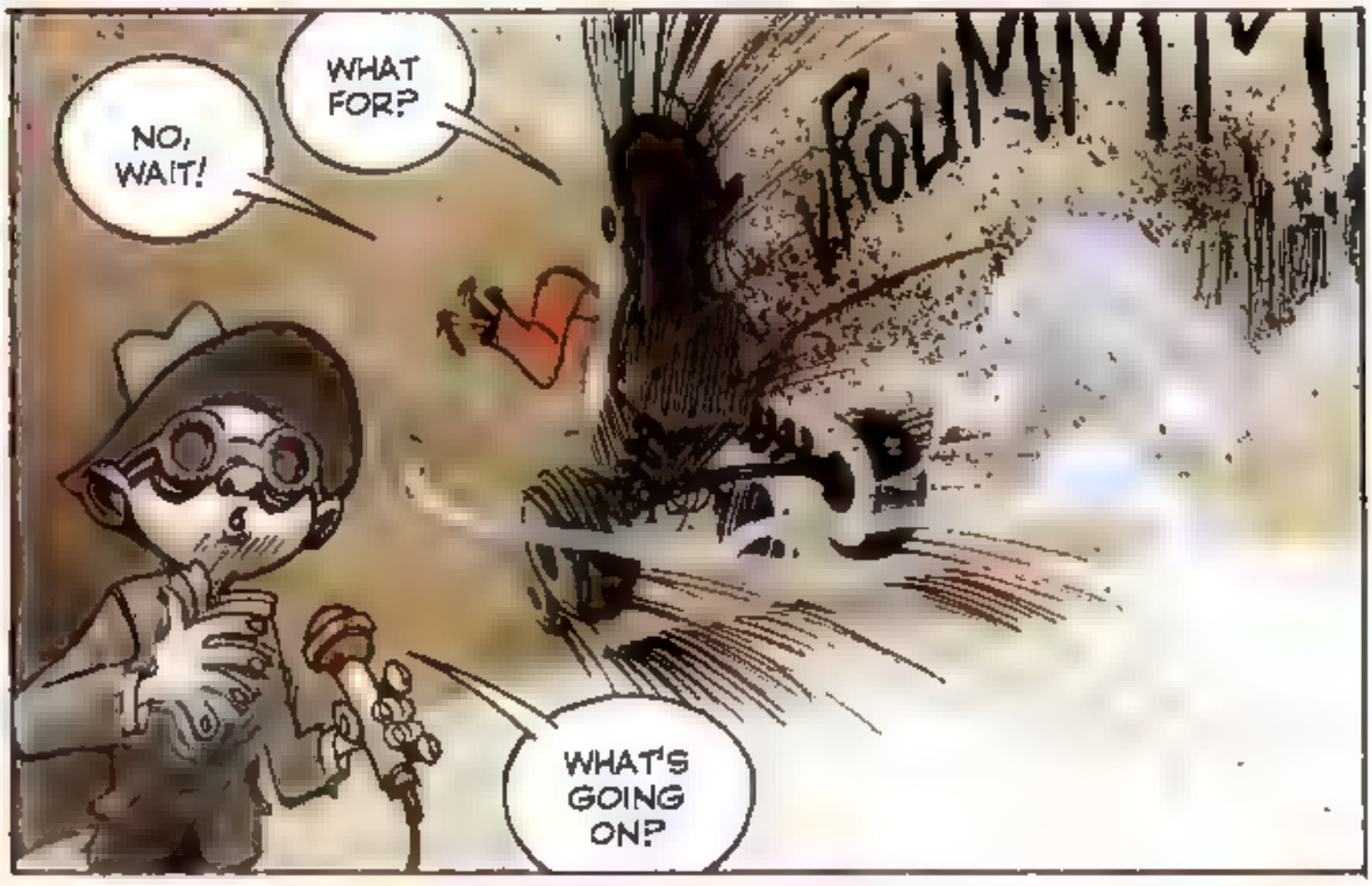
END OF TRANSMISSION

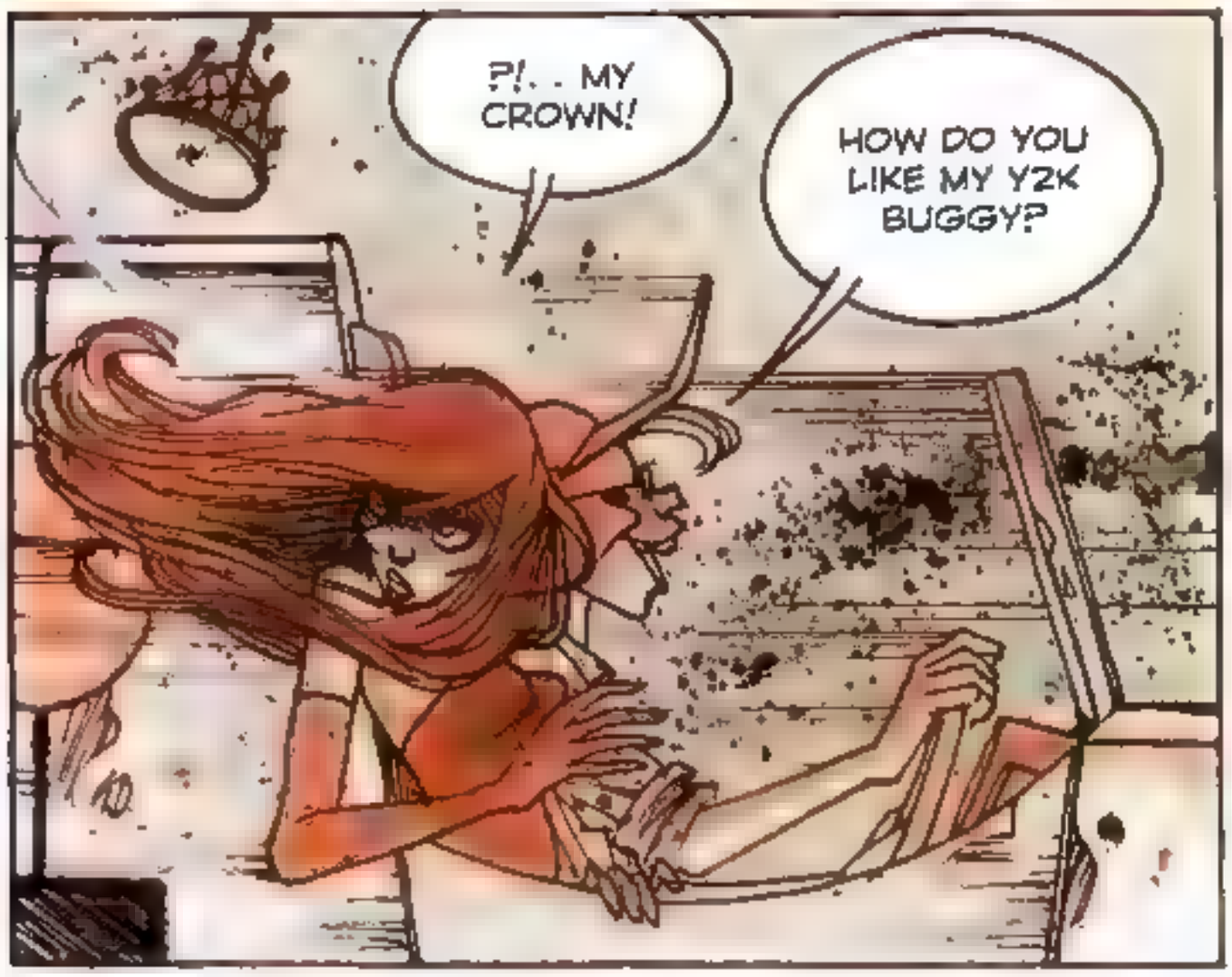
MISS WORLD 2000

BITCH!
BITCH!
BITCH!
BITCH!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU... I WAS REALLY LUCKY
BOOHOO. B*TCH!
BITCH!
BITCH!
LOOK THIS WAY, DOLL!
HEY! I CAN'T SEE A THING!
SMILE FOR THE CAMERA, DOLL!
WOW! WHAT A BABE!
SHE LOOKS ORGANIC ENOUGH TO EAT!
AND WHAT ABOUT PEACE IN THE WORLD?
WHAT'S YOUR PHONE NUMBER, DOLL?... YOUR E-MAIL?
... D'YA HAVE A SISTER?
MY LI'L CHICK-ADEE!
TALK INTO THE MIKE, DOLL.

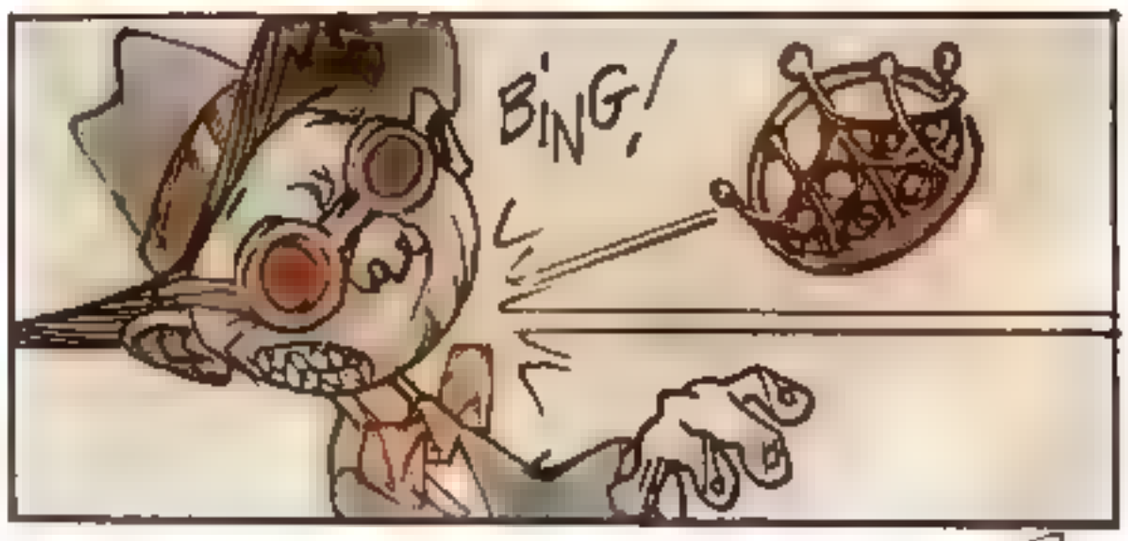
?
?
?
HI YA, DOLL 2000!
?
?
MY BOYFRIEND !?
?
?

LET'S GO CELEBRATE!
BUT.


NO, WAIT!
WHAT FOR?
ROLMMM!!
WHAT'S GOING ON?


?!.. MY CROWN!
HOW DO YOU LIKE MY Y2K BUGGY?

RRRRRRR.
DEAR LISTENERS, I'M IN TOTAL SHOCK, AS I'M SURE YOU ARE...


BING!

GIVE US A KISS!

C'MON, A SLOPPY Y2K KISS...

NO, TAKE ME BACK!

YUCK! YOU SMELL OF BOOZE!

WHAT? THIS GREAT Y2K VINTAGE?! TAKE A GUZZLE!

SPLASH

YOU'RE THE BIGGEST Y2K ASSHOLE!! ...JUST LOOK AT MY DRESS!

SO TAKE IT OFF! I'LL HELP YOU...

RRRRRRRRRR

CRACK!

SPLASH

BUT?! BUT?!

ENOUGH! TAKE ME BACK!!!

?!

LET GO OF THE FUCKIN' STEERING WHEEL!!!

?!

CRASH

RRRRRRRRRR

DEAR LISTENERS, THIS IS AWFUL! MISS WORLD 2000 IS GOING TO PIECES!

CLINGKROUTCH

ONE YEAR TO THE DAY AFTER THE TERRIBLE CAR CRASH WHICH SHE MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED, MISS WORLD 2000 IS BACK AGAIN COMPETING THIS TIME IN A NEW CATEGORY. WITH HER USUAL CAPACITY FOR SUCCESS, SHE HAS HIT THE JACKPOT...

LONG LIVE MISS CYBER 2001!

BITCH!

BITCH!

BITCH!

BITCH!

BITCH!

SHUT UP, YOU TIN TWATS!

BITCH!

LET'S GO CELEBRATE!

WILD, ORSWELL '99

BLOODSHED IS NOT ENOUGH. OUR EMPIRE WILL BE BUILT ON LOVE... I HAVE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE!

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCE-MENT?

OLIVIA AND I .. WILL BE MARRIED THIS EVENING!

WHAT?

HUH?

HAVE YOU GONE COMPLETELY MAD?

DON'T RAISE YOUR HAND TO THE CZAR, MR. JODOROFF!

YOUR WEAPON PLEASE, COLONEL .. YOU'RE BOTH UNDER ARREST FOR TREA-SON TOWARD THE EMPEROR!

. MY UNCLE IS NOT USED TO RECEIVING ORDERS FROM ME. BUT HE'LL GET USED TO IT

NO, LEAVE THEM ALONE!

DRACU! HE MIGHT GET USED TO IT, BUT I WON'T!

TSAGOI !

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54

YOU CAN GET MARRIED IF YOU WANT, YOUNG MAN, BUT NOT TO MY SISTER!

C'MON, SIS! WE'RE LEAVING FOR CIVILIZED REGIONS!

OH, GO FUCK YOURSELF, TSAGOI!

I'M STAYING WITH IVAN, AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE THAT, TOO BAD! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BRING ME HERE!

GRRR!

NOT SO FAST, STRANGER...

BOW TO THE EMPEROR!

TOK

FINAL WARNING!

THAT'S IT! HERE COMES THE RING...

NICE CERE-MONY

YOU'RE SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS?

MHHRRFF!

TOO BAD... YOJR SISTER WON'T LIVE THROUGH MANY SUCH PRECIOUS MOMENTS...

SHE'S NEVER GOING TO FORGET THAT YOU WEREN'T THERE. SOME THINGS CAN NEVER BE FORGIVEN!

HMMRRFF=!

I FOR ONE .. WELL, THE DAY MY SISTER GOT MARRIED, I..

WILL YOU STOP BUSTING MY BALLS? THE GYPSY WIPES HIS ASS WITH YOUR SISTER'S WEDDING! THE GUY THAT MARRIED HER MUST HAVE BEEN A MONGOL TO GET HIMSELF AN ASSHOLE OF A BROTHER-IN-LAW LIKE YOU!

WHERE'S THAT MUSIC COMING FROM?

HUSH!
LISTEN!
QUIET!
36
AM I DREAMING OR...?
YES, IT'S TSAGOI...
FUCKIN' GYPSIES! CAN'T SEE A HARE WITHOUT PULLING OUT A GUN, OR A WEDDING WITHOUT BOWING A VIOLIN.

YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD, TRUCKER.

DRACU! IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I'VE RUN MY FINGERS OVER ONE OF THESE THINGS.

THERE! DON'T ANYONE SAY THAT I WAS-N'T THERE!

CLAP CLAP

BRAVO!

LISTEN, IT'S REALLY CRAMPED HERE WITH THE REFUGEES.

?

DO YOU MIND SHARING THIS ROOM WITH ME?

?

I'LL SLEEP ON THE FLOOR I'M USED TO IT.

OUT OF THE QUESTION! TAKE THE BED! WE'LL SLEEP IN THE BATHTUB, IF WE MUST.

HUH?

AFTER ALL, YOU'RE MY REAL BOSS, MS SELMER!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, BEN? THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST!

YOUR FATHER'S COMPANY BELONGS TO YOU NOW. THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE YOU BACK...

...MY FORTUNE! FOR ALL THE GOOD IT DID WHEN I REALLY NEEDED IT

HUM?

AS FOR MY FATHER, I'D RATHER FORGET HIM... JUST LIKE HE FORGOT ME THE DAY THE SIBERIANS ASKED FOR MY RANSOM!

BUT... DIDN'T YOU KNOW?

YOUR FATHER IS DEAD, MS. SELMER! A HEART ATTACK A FEW DAYS AFTER YOU DISAPPEARED ..

IT WAS YOUR COUSIN, BIRGIT MATTEN, WHO WENT OUT LOOKING FOR YOU.

THERE WAS NO MENTION OF A RAN-SOM!

BIRGIT?

YUP! THE WORLD'S GREATEST BITCH! ..

BIG BEN AND HIS PALS OBEY HER EVERY COMMAND.

DAMN IT! OH DAMN IT! I'M REALLY TIRED OF ALL THIS SHIT!

C'MON .

HEY!

YOU GET THE BATHTUB, I SLEEP IN THE ROOM!

SHE'S YOUR BOSS, NOT MINE!

BUT..

YOU'RE RIGHT, STRANGER THE BED IS BIG ENOUGH FOR TWO!

I KNEW IT. A GUY THAT PLAYS THE VIOLIN LIKE THAT HAS TO HAVE A HEART.

JUST WHAT IT TAKES.

I'M NOT ASKING FOR MORE!

TOC TOC

WHA. ?

ALL IS LOST!

KATIA! IT'S COLONEL BARI!

COLONEL, WHAT'S GOING ON?

WE'VE BEEN BETRAYED! COLONEL SULKOFF AND THE CZAR'S UNCLE ARE PLOTTING WITH THE WHITE WING..

THE WHITE WING?

YEAH, THE MAFIA OF THE OCCULT! I JUST OVERHEARD THEIR CONVERSATION!

THEY ARE PREPAR...

AAAH

COLONEL?..

THE DOOR IS LOCKED...

STEP ASIDE!

CRACK

AAAIIII!

STABBED! BUT THE MURDER-ER?

THERE! IN THE COR-RIDOR!

DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR THE COLONEL! I'LL ALERT THE GUARDS!

OKAY!

HE'S DONE FOR!

SHIT, GYPSY! BEHIND YOU!

HEY! WHAT THE ..? WHAT'S GOING...?

OUCH!

DAMNATION! WHERE DID SHE COME FROM?

HEY?

LOOK OUT BIG B. .!

?

HOWDY, GYPSY! SO WE MEET AGAIN!

SOME MEETING!

HEY, BIG BEN, ARE YOU OKAY?

I TOOK IT IN THE FAT!

WHY DON'T YOU TAKE CARE OF THIS BALLBUSTER?

IS THIS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

DRACU!

THE WHITE WING ASKED ME TO WHACK YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES!

YOU CAN IMAGINE THE EXTENT OF MY...

.. PLEA-SURE!

CHUK

HEY!

RAAAH!

KRASH

SHE SHOULD BE OUT OF THE GAME BY NOW.

Z

WELL, WELL JUST LOOK AT WHAT THEY'VE STUCK TO THE BALCONY

NEVER LIKED GAR-GOYLES MYSELF!

...SPECIALLY IF THEY'VE GOT CLAWS... THAT HOOK INTO..

Z!

...ANYTHING THEY TOUCH!

BY ALL THE BLUE BALLS THAT MY ANCESTORS GOT FROM PISSING BEHIND BUSHES IN WINTER!

HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

SHE'S GETTING AWAY!

GO WARN BURMA! CAN'T LET THIS BITCH GET AWAY!

DON'T BE STUPID! YOU'LL SLIP!

NO KIDDING! I SEE THAT YOU'RE STILL A DJ AT K.S H.I.T !

OH, IVAN! IVAN! I LOVE YOU! .. HOW I LOVE YOU!

THE WORLD IS AT OUR FEET, OBLIVIA!

TOGETHER WE WILL DO MAGNIFICENT THINGS!...

WITH YOU... YES...

RUSSIA WILL BE POWERFUL AND BEAUTIFUL AND JUST!

OBLIVIA!

OH, MY WONDERFUL EMPEROR!

CRAAAZiiiNG

?!?

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

BY THE NOSTRILS OF THE DEMON KALDERASH!

STOP RIGHT THERE, GYPSY, OR I'LL SLIT HER THROAT!

!

PLEASE, NO!

TSAGO!? BUT...

OH, GOD!

UNCLE, WHERE ARE YOU?!

HELP! TRAITORS!

HA HA HA! THAT'S IT, CALL HIM!

AHAHAHA

THANK YOU, WITCH! YOU CAN LET GO OF THE LITTLE GYPSY BITCH NOW!

WHAT? BUT... MY UNCLE?

SHUT UP, FOOL! HAVEN'T YOU UNDERSTOOD YET? YOU ARE BUT A PUPPET CAUGHT UP IN FORCES THAT ARE BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION.

THE REAL MASTER OF THE NEW RUSSIA IS **THE WHITE WING!**

ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE OCCULT WILL SHARE THE FRUITS OF YOUR REIGN!

47

AND THOSE WHO REFUSE TO SERVE...

. THE PURPOSES OF THE WHITE WING...

...MUST DIE!

NO!

NO!

MY SON! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

I HAVE KILLED YOU, MY UNCLE!

I HAVE KILLED THE TRAITOR WHO WANTED TO DESTROY MY DREAM!

MOTHER RUSSIA BELONGS ONLY TO HERSELF!

RUSSIA BELONGS TO NO ONE, NOT EVEN TO THE NOBLE LINEAGE THAT I COME FROM!

YOUNG IDIOT! YOU WERE NEVER THE CZAR! THE ONLY BLOOD THAT FLOWS THROUGH YOUR VEINS IS MINE AND OF THAT WHORE WHO WAS YOUR MOTHER!

OH, HOR-ROR!

NO!

MAY THE DEMONS OF HELL TAKE ME WITH HIM!

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO NOW, WITCH...?

?!

SHE'S OUTTA HERE, COLONEL!

HEY!

THAT BITCH HAS THE GIFT OF DUMPING HER PARTNERS WHEN SHE DOESN'T LIKE THE SONG!

?

OUCH!

SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DANCE WITH ME NOW!

CRAK

CRAK

BRING ME THE TRAITOR!

THE EMPEROR IS SAFE!

THE EMPEROR? THERE'S NO MORE EMPEROR!

ALL THIS WAS A LIE WHICH THAT MONSTER MADE ME BELIEVE EVER SINCE MY CHILDHOOD.

THROW ME OUT INTO THE SNOW AS IF I WERE BUT CRUMBS FOR THE BIRDS!!!

THE SIBERIAN WIND WILL FASHION ME A JESTER'S HAT WITH BELLS OF ICE!

IVAN!

STOP!

I WILL BE THE CZAR OF ALL THE DEAD CHIMERAS THAT LIE IN THE FROZEN PEAT!...

...THE EMPEROR OF EMPTY HORIZONS AND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN!

AND SO IVAN OF RUSSIA BEGINS THE SECOND DAY OF HIS REIGN!...

WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE'S SWORDS, WHICH SHOULD PIERCE HIS FLESH?!

A BULLET WILL SUFFICE, YOUNG MAN!

NO!

NO!

BAM

LOWER YOUR ARMS, EVERYONE! THERE HAS BEEN ENOUGH BLOODSHED!

53

OH GOD!

IVAN!

WHO CARES ABOUT HIS NAME AND BLOODLINE? HIS HEART WAS AS VAST AS THE STEPPES! YOU HAVE JUST KILLED THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD HAVE SAVED YOU!

SHE'S RIGHT. WITHOUT THE PRINCE WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE!!

WHO KNOWS...? A PAGE HAS BEEN TURNED... WE HAVE TO WRITE THE REST OF HISTORY!

I KNOW THE MAN THAT HE COULD HAVE BECOME. NO ONE CAN TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME!

YEAH. YOU'RE BULLHEADED ENOUGH, OBLIVIA. YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HIM!

HEY, GYPSY, WHERE DID YOU HIDE THAT GREAT BOTTLE OF MAMMOTH'S TAIL VODKA?

MARINI

SMOLDO 55

IN THE BIG CRATE. WATCH OUT FOR THE VIOLIN, I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO WRAP IT.

OH? DID YOU BRING THE VIOLIN WITH YOU?

DRACU! YOU BET YOUR ASS!...

THE END